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ABSTRACT

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a new mission statement based on the need to ensure excellence in education for all American students and to provide access to high-quality education for all. This strategic plan focuses attention on a few areas that have been selected as priorities, primarily as a result of legislative successes and recommendations from the National Performance Review. The first priority is to help all students reach challenging academic standards so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment. Creating a comprehensive school-to-work opportunities system in every state is the second designated priority. The third priority is ensuring access to high-quality postsecondary education and lifelong learning. Transforming the Department of Education into a high-performance organization is the fourth designated priority. Objectives and strategies in support of each of these priorities are outlined. The Department of Education is committed to learners of all ages and to fostering learning, innovation, and teamwork throughout the Department. Three figures complement the discussion. (SLD)

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ED 381 565

STRATEGIC PLAN for the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The U.S. National Education Goals

In 1990, the President and the Governors of the 50 states agreed upon a set of six national education goals that would guide the federal government, states, local communities, and the private sector as they worked together to improve the education system in the United States.

In 1994, the Congress passed the ***Goals 2000: Educate America Act****, with strong bipartisan support and the backing of almost every major national parental, educational, and business organization as well as the nation's governors and legislators. Part of the act commits the federal government to support eight ambitious national goals (the original set plus two new ones on teacher training and parental involvement):*

By the year 2000:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. All students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.
4. United States students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
7. The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
8. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

The Department of Education's Mission

To ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation.

Message on Accomplishing the Department's Strategic Plan

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a new mission statement based on the following principles:

- To ensure excellence in education for all American students, standards of academic learning need to be raised.
- All students must have access to high-quality education.

The Department does not provide educational services directly; it supports states, local communities, and higher education institutions to improve education nationwide. The Department's roles include leadership and financial support for education to agencies, institutions, and individuals in situations where there is a national interest; monitoring and enforcement of civil rights in the area of education; and support for research and evaluations and dissemination of findings to improve the quality of education. We work in partnership with neighborhoods, schools, colleges, educators, parents, business leaders, and communities and states across the country.

To accomplish our mission, the Department has developed an ambitious set of initiatives that support comprehensive, community-based reforms aimed at safe, well-disciplined schools and high academic and occupational achievement. These initiatives emphasize yardsticks against which states and local communities can measure their progress. They offer catalytic funding, partnerships, and flexibility to encourage state and local improvement efforts throughout the United States. They provide financial support to help ensure that needier students are included in these academic reforms. They streamline the financial aid system for postsecondary education students and make it more accountable.

To accomplish our agenda and reform the way we do business, we have prepared a strategic plan with goals, priorities, strategies, and performance indicators plus a set of organizational values to guide implementation. ***The strategic plan does not cover every important activity in the Department—the plan focuses attention on a few areas that have been selected as priorities, primarily as a result of legislative successes and recommendations from the National Performance Review.*** The plan is not a static document—it will be refined as the Department develops better indicators of performance and gathers new feedback data from our customers.

Achievements—Our Education Agenda in Place

During the 103rd Congress, the President proposed and the Congress enacted a historic set of new laws. These laws are tools for states, communities, and schools to help our students meet the challenges of the 21st century.

- The ***Goals 2000: Educate America Act*** promotes safe and disciplined schools that use the best teaching practices and appropriate technology. In these schools, children will learn basic and advanced skills that meet challenging state standards. ***Goals 2000*** provides financial support to states and local communities to strengthen their schools and cuts federal red tape in favor of local creativity and initiative.
- The ***Improving America's Schools Act*** brings additional improvements, providing (1) federal support for at-risk children to help them achieve the challenging standards in core academic subjects set by states and communities; (2) greater involvement of parents and communities in

learning; (3) improved teaching through better professional development; (4) new assistance to make schools safer and drug-free; and (5) support for effective changes in school practice and management, such as using technology to improve teaching and learning and initiating charter schools.

- The ***School-to-Work Opportunities Act*** is helping communities and states put in place high-quality systems of academic and occupational education to give students the opportunity to graduate with the knowledge, skills, and workplace experience necessary for productive employment and further education.
- The ***Student Loan Reform Act*** streamlines the college student financial aid system by cutting out inefficiencies and by authorizing direct lending and income-contingent payback systems to ensure that students have access to high-quality postsecondary education, regardless of their means. The act will save students and taxpayers billions of dollars in the next five years.
- The **reauthorization of the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement** creates a system of research institutes that will develop new knowledge on how to help all students reach challenging standards and will make educational research useful and relevant to teachers, parents, and principals.

In their first year, these legislative initiatives received substantial budgets from Congress—in addition to bipartisan support for the basic authorizing legislation. At the same time, the Department received Congressional approval to eliminate a number of other programs identified by the National Performance Review as having low educational impacts. Our legislative successes are providing a framework and sound strategies for reauthorization of other key legislation next year.

Along with the successful legislative agenda, the Department has launched a new family involvement partnership for learning. We have formed a broad-based partnership led by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) to encourage and support American families as they seek to prepare their children for an information-based, "high-tech" economy. The alliance includes such organizations as the National PTA, the National Alliance of Business, the U.S. Catholic Conference, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

These initiatives herald the start of a new era in education leadership—a more balanced role for the federal government and empowerment of neighborhoods, communities, schools, colleges, and states to improve education for all Americans.

Achievements—Streamlining the Department and Responding to Our Customers

In addition to our legislative and program initiatives, we have made long-needed improvements in our management and operations:

- The Department's implementation of the new Direct Loan program for student financial aid has been enthusiastically received by the initial set of participating institutions.
- A historic labor-management partnership now provides the means for all of us to work together on common goals and initiatives.
- A new core financial management system will be in place by 1998 to put the Department's payment, grant and contract, and audit tracking systems in the mainstream of business practice.
- The Department has implemented an integrated strategic planning and performance measurement process to develop this plan and individual office plans aligned with overall goals and priorities.

- Offices developed initial performance measures for many key programs in the Department as part of the fiscal year 1996 budget development process. The budget and program performance indicators were closely coordinated with the Department's strategic plan.
- The Department's customer service team developed a brochure describing the Department's commitment to its customers. The brochure was distributed to customers, such as chief state school officers and school superintendents, and major stakeholders, such as business and community representatives, in addition to all Department staff.
- The number of days the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) takes to resolve cases is decreasing dramatically. In the past year alone, OCR's New York office reduced the time needed to resolve complaints by 24 percent. OCR now responds to complaints within five days after receipt, offering a range of complaint procedures such as mediation, early complaint resolution, and fact-finding conferences.
- In October 1994, the Department prepared a streamlining plan that identified seven key priorities to guide simplification and reductions in all aspects of our operations. The streamlining plan is closely linked to the priorities and goals of the Department's overall strategic plan. It sets forth office by office plans for reducing staff, especially in categories targeted by the National Performance Review.
- Cross-cutting management teams are addressing critical problems to make us the best organization in government and the private sector. For example:
  - The Department has streamlined its grant award process by giving grantees much earlier notification of their status, by distributing many grant funds electronically, and by eliminating unnecessary negotiations affecting 6,000 continuation grants a year.
  - A special management-union team is overhauling the Department's personnel system—reengineering the processes for filling jobs, promoting staff, and separating staff. Pilot innovations are already under way between the Office of Management and four offices, including delegation of classification authority and testing of classification system software.
  - Greater and more creative use of technology is helping to improve services within the Department. For example, e-mail, including Internet e-mail, is now available to 65 percent of all Department employees.
  - Technology is also being used to support innovative technical assistance activities for external customers. For example, the Department has developed on-line computer systems and discussion forums, including the Grants and Contracts Service's interactive computer bulletin board, the National Library of Education's on-line library, and a teacher forum sponsored by the Office of the Secretary.
- Customers will soon be able to call one toll-free number—1-800-USA-LEARN—and reach our one-stop shopping line for information on all our programs and initiatives, applications for grants, and publications.
- "Low-hanging apples" teams have identified more than 60 unnecessary and burdensome procedures and practices that can be easily fixed or eliminated—like apples on the lowest branches of the tree that are the ripest and easiest to pick. Most of these procedures are being changed or eliminated.

These actions are helping us transform the Department into a high-performance, customer-responsive, results-oriented organization.

Key Strategies and a Promise

To date, the Department's leadership and staff have accomplished many important reforms, but much more remains to be done.

- The most critical task now facing us is to implement our new and reauthorized programs in a way that supports improvements in teaching and learning and reduces regulatory burdens on our customers.
- We will work with Congress to complete our legislative agenda for key programs, including improvements in vocational and adult education and in education for individuals with disabilities.
- We must continue to build strong partnerships with the American people and the nation's educational institutions.
- We must work with other government agencies to develop more coherent and effective policies in broad, cross-cutting areas such as inner-city education, early childhood education, and lifelong learning.
- Finally, the Department must continue to transform itself into a high-performance institution capable of providing the necessary leadership and support for this ambitious program.

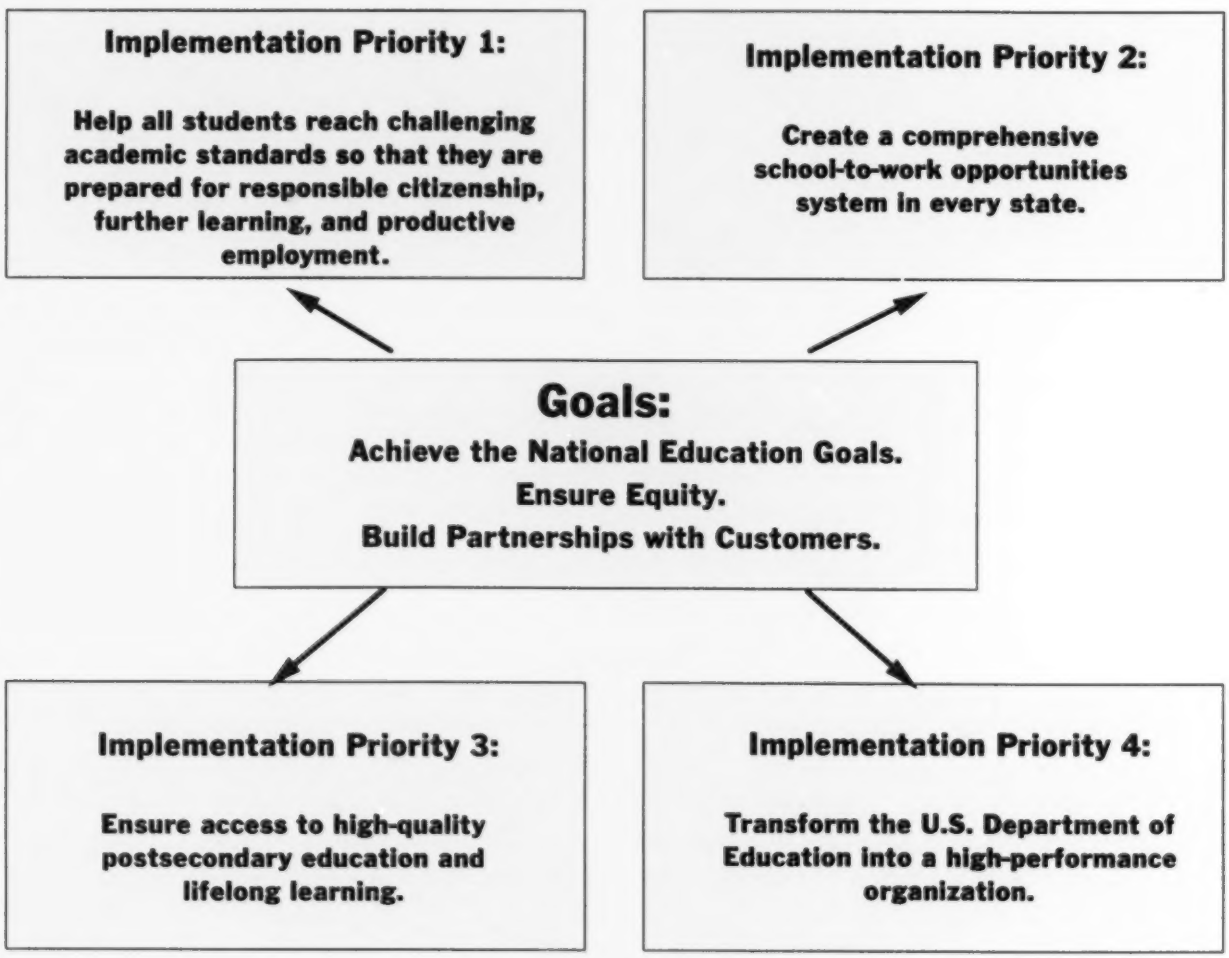
This document sets out the strategic plan to carry out our agenda. ***By adopting the goals, objectives, and performance indicators in this plan, the Department of Education is entering into a performance agreement with the President of the United States and with the American people. The measure of our success will be the progress we make toward our goals.***

Richard W. Riley, ***Secretary of Education***

Madeleine M. Kunin, ***Deputy Secretary***

Marshall S. Smith, ***Under Secretary***

U.S. Department of Education
Goals and Priorities


Implementation Priority 1:
Help all students reach challenging academic standards so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.
Implementation Priority 2:
Create a comprehensive school-to-work opportunities system in every state.
Goals:
Achieve the National Education Goals.
Ensure Equity.
Build Partnerships with Customers.
Implementation Priority 3:
Ensure access to high-quality postsecondary education and lifelong learning.
Implementation Priority 4:
Transform the U.S. Department of Education into a high-performance organization.

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Example of an Academic Content Standard

NCTM Standard Number 12: Geometry

The following is drawn from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards for mathematics. At each of three grade spans (1-4, 5-8, 9-12), the standards try to set out clear expectations for what students should know about mathematics and be able to do with their knowledge.

In grades 5-8, the mathematics curriculum should include the study of the geometry of one, two, and three dimensions in a variety of situations so that students can—

- — Identify, describe, compare, and classify geometric figures;
- — Visualize and represent geometric figures with special attention to developing spatial sense;
- — Explore transformations of geometric figures;
- — Represent and solve problems using geometric models;
- — Understand and apply geometric properties and relationships;
- — Develop an appreciation of geometry as a means of describing the physical world.

Example of State Systemic Reform

Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990

In 1990, Kentucky overhauled its state education system in response to the state supreme court's ruling that found the state's public school financing unconstitutional and the entire system inequitable. Under the banner "world-class standards for world-class kids," the state developed a 10-point program of education reform.

Through the Kentucky Education Reform Act, the state created new assessments and set challenging performance levels; upgraded curriculum and professional development; and established a performance accountability system with multiple components. Changes at the elementary school level included ungraded primary classrooms and family resource centers. The state also overhauled its school finance system. Local school systems responded with reforms of their own.

Kentucky's comprehensive school reforms are showing encouraging preliminary results. Kentucky's 4th, 8th, and 12th graders demonstrated dramatic improvement on the 1993-94 annual assessments. In all grades tested, the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level in mathematics, reading, science, and social studies increased from the previous year. For example, in grade 4, the average of the scores across these four subjects plus writing increased from 26 points in 1993 to 33 points in 1994.

More remains to be done, however, to reach the high standards the state has set for its students. While reading scores increased substantially, just 12 percent of 4th graders were reading at the proficient level in 1994.

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Priority 1

Help all students reach challenging academic standards so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

The key to improving student performance is comprehensive and sustained education reform based on challenging academic standards for every child. We have learned, after decades of trying, that piecemeal reform and fads do not work. We have learned that reform requires leadership and support at all levels:

- Parents, principals and teachers, community members, school districts, higher education institutions, the business community, states, and the federal government—all have key roles to play.
- Greater family and community involvement, knowledgeable teachers, a demanding, substantive curriculum, accessible technology, assessment aligned with the standards, and better leadership are all necessary if students are to meet more challenging standards.

There is broad agreement that high expectations and challenging standards for academic performance must replace the low expectations and watered-down standards too common in our school systems today. Furthermore, these standards need to be set by states and communities—not the federal government. The U.S. Department of Education's main roles are leadership, encouragement, and support for state and local efforts, not regulation and control.

New national initiatives—including the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the Improving America's Schools Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, and the National Family Involvement Partnership for Learning—provide the support, encouragement, and partnerships for states and communities to strengthen their schools to meet challenging standards and be more effective. The recent reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement provides significant additional support, as will upcoming reauthorizations, including the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Build public understanding of the need for challenging academic standards, and promote family involvement and broad-based community support in helping all students reach these standards.

- Communicate to the public the importance of having challenging standards for all children and the need to improve teaching and learning.
- Work with parental, educational, and business organizations and states to engage key partners and the public in improving schools.
- Encourage and support family, community, business, and religious organization partnerships to promote learning at home and at school.

Objective 2: Help create safe, disciplined, healthy, and drug-free environments for learning.

- Support state and local efforts to create and maintain safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools and school surroundings.
- Promote comprehensive approaches in which schools are linked with community resources to support academic achievement and healthy and safe child development.
- Engage families, community centers, housing developments, cultural and scientific institutions, religious organizations, and libraries in creating out-of-school environments that support learning.

Objective 3: Support the development and adoption by states and local schools of challenging academic standards, occupational standards, and assessment systems linked to these standards.

- Help state and local reformers develop and implement challenging standards for academic content and performance.
- Encourage the development of high-quality, voluntary, national academic and occupational standards.
- Share information with states and local schools as they develop and implement valid and reliable assessments that are aligned with challenging standards and are designed to improve student learning.

Objective 4: Promote excellent teaching that will enable students to meet challenging state and local academic standards.

- Strengthen professional development efforts of states, schools, colleges, and teacher networks in order to enable teachers to teach to challenging standards.
- Engage teachers and other educators in examining, using, and assessing effective teaching and learning strategies.
- Coordinate and integrate state and national technical assistance to improve professional development.
- Encourage more people—particularly people of diverse backgrounds—to enter the teaching profession.

Objective 5: Change the way the Department works in order to support coordinated implementation of elementary and secondary programs.

- Create an effective process for integrating reviews of state plans and waivers, program monitoring, and technical assistance across the Department.
- Promote greater flexibility for state and local grant recipients and expanded waiver authority in exchange for accountability for results.
- Implement streamlined, customer-oriented processes for managing reform initiatives across traditional organizational boundaries. For example, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education is revising its monitoring procedures to establish cross-cutting teams that will handle integrated monitoring and technical assistance across categorical program boundaries.
- Collect and analyze information for feedback on the progress of reform and its impact on student performance.
- Develop and disseminate guidance on effective education policies, practices, and processes based on research and evaluation.
- Develop and institute a comprehensive system of technical assistance centers (the "Super TACs") to offer "one-stop" access to information, technical assistance, and training about strategies for improvement contributed by schools and researchers throughout the country.

Objective 6: Promote federal, state, and local efforts that bring about excellence and equity in educational opportunities for all students, to enable them to achieve at higher levels.

- Focus federal resources and research on helping all children to meet challenging standards through support for enriching curricula, well-prepared teachers, family involvement in learning, and safe and drug-free learning environments.
- Work with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Labor to strengthen the links between Head Start and schools, between schools and employers, and between high schools and postsecondary institutions in order to ensure extended and enhanced learning opportunities in schools and communities served by federal education programs.
- Promote greater flexibility, assistance, and accountability at the school level for improved performance, including intensive assistance and other strategies in schools that do not meet challenging performance standards.
- Enforce Title VI (Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs) of the Civil Rights Act and other civil rights laws—working constructively with states and local school districts to achieve remedies that promote both equity and excellence.
- Support the creation of charter school initiatives across the country.
- Work with parents, educators, civil rights organizations, and other groups to ensure educational access and opportunity for all students.

Objective 7: Promote the use of technology in education.

- Promote the use of technology in the classroom to help all students achieve to challenging standards.
- Promote the use of educational technologies in professional development and preservice instruction in support of high-quality teaching.
- Support expanded access to educational technology by low-income families, including access through libraries and community centers.
- Support research and evaluation of effective uses of technology that advance improvements in classrooms and schools and promote strengthened connections between home and school.
- Encourage the development of the next generation of technological learning tools.

Performance Indicators for School Improvement Focused on Challenging Standards

Improved Learning:

- Student achievement nationally and in high-poverty schools will show significant improvement in at least two core subjects.
  - Between 1994 and 1998, the proportion of students who meet or exceed proficiency levels in reading and math on such measures as the National Assessment of Educational Progress will increase by at least 10 percentage points.
  - Students in high-poverty schools will show improvement comparable to that for the nation, dramatically reversing the decline in disadvantaged communities in recent years.
  - Students targeted by other federal programs, including Native American students, limited-English-proficient students, and migrant students, will show gains comparable to those for students overall; students with disabilities will show gains indicating that they are achieving to their full potential.

Performance Indicators for School Improvement Focused on Challenging Standards (continued)

Greater Support for Learning:

- Student drug use, drinking, and violence in schools will decline significantly.
  - The percentage of high school students who engage in illicit drug use or drinking will decline each year starting in 1995—in marked contrast to trends in the last few years.
  - The incidence of school violence and student and teacher victimization will decline steadily each year.

- Family involvement in learning will improve in all types of schools and communities.
  - By 1998 the proportion of young children whose parents read to them regularly will increase significantly (from 66 percent in 1993).
  - Surveys of parents will indicate that larger percentages say that schools are more open and responsive to their involvement.
  - Surveys of parents in high-poverty schools will show increased percentages aware of their importance in their children's education and more actively involved in learning activities in the home and at school, including participation in family-school compacts.

Increased Participation in Improvement:

- The number of schools actively working to enable students to reach high standards will increase each year.
  - By school year 1996-97, as many as 20,000 individual schools—about one quarter of the public schools in the country—will actively participate in locally developed reform. For school year 1998-99 the target is 60,000 schools.
  - The increasing number of Title I schoolwide programs, charter schools, and comprehensive bilingual education programs will indicate growing innovative and integrated approaches to improve teaching and learning.
  - By 1997-98, surveys of principals and teachers will indicate that at least 25 percent of the schools and classrooms have aligned curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment to meet challenging state or local standards. Improvement in aligning classroom practice with challenging standards will be recognized by staff in at least half of all high-poverty schools.
  - By 1997-98, at least half of all Title I schoolwide program plans will show comprehensive approaches to improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with challenging state and local standards.

- More states will use high-quality standards to guide student assessment and curriculum frameworks.
  - By school year 1995-96, at least 25 percent of the states will have content and performance standards in place for two or more core subjects; 80 percent of the states will have them by 1997-98.
  - Independent evaluations in an anonymous sample of states will show that their standards are comparable to benchmarks for high standards, such as voluntary national, international, or recognized state standards.
  - By 1996-97, at least 25 percent of the states will have aligned assessments and provisions to assess all students for two core subjects; by 1998-99, 50 percent of the states will have them.

Performance Indicators for School Improvement Focused on Challenging Standards (continued)

- Greater use of technology in the classroom will help students achieve challenging standards.
  - In fall 1995 the Department will present to the President and to Congress a long-range plan for using technology in education.
  - In each of the next five years, the number of students who use interactive technologies, telecommunications networks, and new tools that address state standards will increase significantly. Use of technology in high-poverty schools will be comparable to that in other schools; students with disabilities will have equitable access to appropriate technologies.

- Challenging state content and performance standards will lead to improvement in the quality and coherence of professional development and to revision of teacher certification.
  - Surveys of teachers will show larger percentages engaged in intensive, sustained professional development that is enabling them to teach to challenging standards.
  - Teachers in high-poverty schools will participate in intensive, sustained professional development at rates comparable to or higher than the rates for teachers in other schools.
  - By 1996-97, 75 percent of the states will review state licensing/certification standards for teachers; by 1996-97 at least 50 percent of the states will make noticeable progress in aligning and raising teacher licensing standards consistent with their student academic standards.

Increased Public Participation and Support for Improvement:

- Public awareness of the importance of challenging academic standards and the need for parental involvement in school improvement will increase significantly.
  - Surveys of the general public and of parents will show increased awareness among Americans of the importance of challenging standards for all children and of the need for improved teaching and learning.
  - Surveys of national organizations and states will show that increased outreach has produced greater understanding and engagement of key partners and all segments of the public in school improvement.

Enhanced Federal Support for Improvement:

- The Department will take effective steps to simplify or eliminate bureaucratic requirements.
  - Approval processes for plans submitted for the Goals 2000 and Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs will require much less red tape and regulations.
  - New waiver authority and flexibility will stimulate increasing numbers of schools to implement promising innovations and integrated approaches to respond to the needs of children, while suggesting areas for policy change and regulatory streamlining at all governance levels.

- Research findings on promising practices and "what works" will be extensively disseminated to people who need and will use the information.

Examples of School-to-Work Systems

Rindge School of Technical Arts, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Rindge School has about 13 percent of its seniors in highly structured school-to-work programs. The curriculum integrates academic and vocational learning, and prepares students for the world of work as well as for further education. Over the past four years 85 percent of the school-to-work students have entered college upon graduation.

- *In 9th and/or 10th grade:* School-to-work students take the CityWorks program, examining their urban community and the inner workings of local industries. Students create various artifacts such as three-dimensional maps and models, photographic essays, video tapes, and oral histories. In humanities, students read and discuss texts related to their investigations and write about their experiences and ideas. Math and science are fully integrated with the CityWorks program.
- *In 10th grade:* The Pathways program gives students opportunities for classroom exploration of the role of work in four broad career paths (health and human services, business and entrepreneurship, arts and communications, and industrial technology). Courses involve job shadowing and preparation of work biographies, student exhibitions, and academic studies.
- *In 11th and 12th grades:* Students take an academic course taught in the workplace through internships (at Polaroid, Harvard University Facilities Management, a Cambridge hospital, or as part of the Careers in Education program) in addition to their vocational and academic programs.

Roosevelt High School, Portland, Oregon

Roosevelt High School students were being suspended and expelled at rates higher than those at any other public school in Portland. Absentee and dropout rates were very high. Most students were not going on to college. And employers made it very clear—graduates weren't prepared for work either. Ninety percent of Roosevelt teachers felt that the school curriculum needed a technical dimension that expanded the learning environment for the students. To address these problems, Roosevelt teachers developed a comprehensive school-to-work program:

- *In 9th grade:* Students do hands-on projects and team-oriented classwork in core academic classes. They see how adults use what the students are learning in class—how a builder uses math formulas, how business people change styles of writing for different purposes and audiences. The students explore six career pathways and select one to concentrate on at the end of the year.
- *In 10th grade:* Teachers design assignments in core academic subjects around the six pathways. In English, students may read biographies about leaders in their career pathways. In history, they may research events and developments that shaped that field. All students take a class specific to their pathway—for example, a business student might take introduction to computers.
- *In 11th grade:* Teachers continue to integrate academic skills with the student's career pathway. Students take advanced academic classes and additional pathway classes to prepare for four-year college as well as careers. Trade and tourism students might take a foreign language; manufacturing technology students might take statistics.
- *In 12th grade:* Students continue to take core academic subjects such as civics and economics and advanced academics, while participating in more structured work experience. Every senior gets a part-time field experience for a school quarter, coupled with community service. Many will take community college courses as well.

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Priority 2

Create a comprehensive school-to-work opportunities system in every state.

To prepare for the technology-oriented, highly competitive economy of the 21st century, our nation's young people will need a higher level of academic and occupational knowledge and skills. Today, too many American youth do not receive the education they need to successfully pursue postsecondary education and training or to prepare for a career. Most of our international competitors recognized some time ago that economic competitiveness depends primarily on their ability to upgrade and continually improve the skills of their workforce. Building partnerships between education and business, they have developed comprehensive systems that provide a smooth transition from school to the labor market. While other nations are refining and improving their school-to-work systems, the United States is just beginning to build one.

President Clinton made the development of a comprehensive school-to-work system for American youth one of the major goals of his administration. With bipartisan support in Congress, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act was signed into law on May 4, 1994. A historic partnership between the Departments of Education and Labor is promoting the creation of comprehensive systems in every state.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Provide national leadership to states and communities in the design and implementation of school-to-work systems through technical assistance, research and evaluation, coordination with other federal initiatives, and outreach to employers, educators, workers, community groups, elected officials, parents, and students.

- Establish mechanisms for implementing and administering the school-to-work initiative jointly with the Department of Labor.
- Build a knowledge base through a national program of rigorous research, demonstration, and evaluation of best practices in designing and implementing school-to-work systems.
- Provide national leadership to encourage the active participation of employers, educators, workers, community organizations, and elected officials to promote the design and implementation of high-quality school-to-work systems in states and local communities.

Objective 2: Ensure that *all* students—including students who are disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, have dropped out of school, or have a disability—have opportunities to participate in school-to-work opportunities systems that prepare them for college and careers.

- Work closely with states and communities to "roll out" school-to-work systems that reach all students.
- Through national research and demonstration activities, promote the development and adoption of effective school-to-work systems that serve a diverse range of students.
- Launch a national outreach effort to encourage all parents and students to promote and participate in school-to-work programs.

Objective 3: Promote high-quality learning and teaching that integrate academic and occupational learning, link secondary and postsecondary education, connect school- and work-based education, and promote the use of technology.

- Implement national technical assistance and research and development strategies to promote curriculum development, professional development, assessment practices, and other measures critical to high-quality school-to-work systems.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for using technology in support of school-to-work reforms.
- Work with leaders in states, communities, and businesses to ensure meaningful employer participation in designing and implementing school-to-work systems.

Objective 4: Ensure that youth in school-to-work systems have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a skills certificate tied to challenging academic and occupational standards, and are prepared for postsecondary education and training and for high-wage jobs with career ladders.

- Encourage states and communities to adopt comprehensive skills standards developed in cooperation with industry and the National Skills Standards Board.
- Conduct a national evaluation of the School-to-Work Opportunities initiative to determine its effects on a range of student performance measures, including academic achievement, high school completion, earning a skills certificate, postsecondary attendance and completion, and employment.
- To continually assess the progress of students and programs, build performance measurement systems with states and communities.

Objective 5: Align school-to-work opportunities systems with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Improving America's Schools Act, Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, Adult Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Job Training Partnership Act, and related federal programs.

- Work with states to integrate education reform strategies developed under Goals 2000 with those developed under the School-to-Work Opportunities initiative.
- Reauthorize the Perkins Act to support the School-to-Work Opportunities initiative and to become an important agent for improvement in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions.
- Establish procedures for approval of waivers, administration, and accountability that are coordinated with other federal education and training initiatives for youth.
- Develop a legislative proposal that links Perkins and the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) in a coordinated, coherent school-to-work system for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Performance Indicators for School-to-Work Opportunities Systems

Increased Participation:

- By the end of the 1996-97 school year, at least 20,000 students (including disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and school dropouts); 5 percent of high schools; 10 percent of community colleges; at least half of the states; and at least 8,000 employers will be participating in school-to-work initiatives in diverse geographic areas throughout the nation. These figures will represent significant increases from the baseline of 2,000 to 3,500 students and 1,000 employers estimated to be participating in school-to-work programs in 1994.
- By fall 2000 at least 450,000 youth, 50 percent of high schools and community colleges, and 50,000 employers will be participating.

Improved Student Performance:

- By fall 2000 a national evaluation will indicate that School-to-Work Opportunities systems have increased high school graduation rates, increased student achievement, decreased school dropout rates, increased the number of students completing a postsecondary certificate or degree program, and increased the number of students prepared for and participating in career ladder jobs upon completion of their chosen course of study.

Excellent Support and Coordination:

- By fall 1996 state and local plans, requests for waivers, technical assistance, program guidance, and research and evaluation will be coordinated with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Improving America's Schools Act, Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Adult Education Act.
- States that have received school-to-work implementation grants and Goals 2000 grants for implementation in years 2-5 will report in a customer survey that they are able to administer these initiatives as part of an integrated approach to improve their schools and educate all youth to challenging standards.
- The Department, jointly with the Department of Labor, develops, submits, and receives approval for legislation to streamline federal education and job training programs to promote a coherent, coordinated training system for in-school and out-of-school youth.
- A coordinated federal system supporting education and job training for in-school and out-of-school youth will be in place by 1997.

High Customer Satisfaction:

- Employers will express a high degree of satisfaction with graduates of school-to-work systems and with the quality of the systems.
- States, communities, and major stakeholder organizations will be satisfied—measured through a customer survey in early 1996—with the federal administration of the initiative and the timeliness and quality of response to requests for information and assistance.

Direct Loan Examples: Repayment Options and Comments on the Program

Repaying a $20,000 Student Loan

The Direct Loan program will allow borrowers to choose a repayment schedule that best fits their circumstances. *Under the old system*, a borrower leaving school with $20,000 in debt who wanted to take a public service job at $10,000 a year would be faced with monthly payments of $232—more than one-fourth of his or her monthly income.

Under the Direct Loan program, the same borrower would have the following repayment options:

- — Standard repayment ($232 a month) — repayment over about 10 years.
- — Extended repayment ($155 a month) — repayment over about 15 years.
- — Graduated repayment ($119 a month) — starting out low and increasing payments later, under the assumption that the graduate will earn more after a few years.
- — Income-contingent repayment ($44 a month in the first year of earning $10,000 a year and adjusted each year thereafter to reflect actual income).

Each option has advantages and disadvantages depending on the borrower's circumstances. Information will be made available to support informed choices by student loan borrowers.

Customer Comments on the New Direct Loan Program

(From Internet e-mail and newspaper accounts)

Phyllis Hooyman, director of financial aid at Hope College in Michigan: "Believe it or not, this is a government program that works!"

Jerry Sullivan, University of Colorado at Boulder: "Now we are finding that many things that we did before in processing aid were designed to accommodate how we related to other agencies. . . .The big savings will come as we adjust to not having to do certain things any more. People often ask how many staff do you have to add? Sallie May indicated in their study of last year that we would need dozens more. I have news for them. We did it with one less staff person this year, and we and the bursar will do it with fewer fall and spring start-up staff than ever before next year."

Harriet L. Rojas, associate director of financial aid, University of Idaho: "The biggest joy of Direct Lending is having the money ready for the students when they expect to receive it. . . .We figure that we are 4 to 6 weeks ahead of last year's schedule in terms of students getting their funding and numbers of loans processed. . . .We are very pleased with the program, and our students have definitely been the beneficiaries of better service."

Karen Feeks, financial aid director for the University of Florida: "Our real savings will come in reducing the number of players in the process. We are actively involved with 200 banks and 35 guarantee agencies around the country. With direct lending, there will be only one entity to deal with—the Department of Education."

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Priority 3

Ensure access to high-quality postsecondary education and lifelong learning.

In many respects the American postsecondary education and research system is among the best in the world. Enrollment in postsecondary education is high—in 1991, 63 percent of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education—and enrollment has increased steadily in recent years. American research universities have been the source for many critical scientific and technological breakthroughs in the 20th century.

Recent reforms in federal financing of student aid will support our already strong system and ensure that any capable student who is interested in attending postsecondary education can do so, without undue financial burden.

— At the federal level, the new Direct Loan program for college students is expected to produce important benefits, including simplified administration of student aid, improved information to borrowers, and substantial savings to students and the public.

— Between 1990 and 1992, student loan default rates were cut by one-third and collections were doubled, saving taxpayers almost $2 billion in fiscal year 1994.

However, there is still room for improvement.

— Economically disadvantaged students continue to have less access than others to postsecondary education and training. While enrollment in postsecondary education in America is high and has increased steadily in recent years, large disparities remain in the enrollment rates of low- and high-income students.

— Students often fail to complete their course of study. Only one-half of high school graduates who enroll in a four-year college immediately after high school complete their bachelor's degree within six years.

— It appears that some institutions are abusing students' trust and the institutions' basic responsibility for the taxpayer's dollar. These institutions are providing a substandard level of education—as documented in a number of Congressional hearings, General Accounting Office (GAO) investigative reports, Inspector General findings, and, in some cases, by very high default rates.

— The postsecondary financing and training system is fragmented. Currently, private business-supported training is not readily available to lower-skill employees, and major federal training programs are spread out among at least three agencies—Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services—with little or no coordination. The move to a high-skill, information-based economy will require all Americans to have access to a set of opportunities to improve their workforce skills that is more coherent than that which is currently available to most people.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Remove financial barriers by providing an appropriate combination of grants, loans, and work-study funds to enable students at all income levels to finance postsecondary education.

- Successfully implement the Direct Loan program to reduce the cost of borrowing to students and the public and to simplify the process of obtaining a student loan.
- Help borrowers repay loans by providing a variety of options for repayment, including income-contingent repayment.
- Explore additional means to reduce the financial barriers to participation in postsecondary education.

Objective 2: Provide the necessary leadership, oversight, and support services to ensure that all students have access to postsecondary education programs that develop their academic and vocational skills.

- Revitalize efforts to improve the quality and integrity of institutions eligible to participate in student aid programs while reducing the regulatory burden placed on high-performing institutions.
- Enhance student educational attainment by providing funds for nonfinancial services that disadvantaged students may need in order to take advantage of further educational opportunities. The TRIO programs support services such as advanced academic and lab tutoring, remedial education, mentoring, and financial, academic, and career counseling.
- Help higher education institutions to keep improvement of instructional quality at the top of their agenda.

Objective 3: Enable adults to have access to a system of lifelong learning in order to advance literacy, employment, and personal development.

- Develop lifelong learning and adult education policies for providing an integrated system of high-quality education and training opportunities for individuals at various stages of their lives.
- Improve "second chance" education and training opportunities by increasing the intensity of training, expanding the availability of needed support services, and contextualizing instruction.
- Raise standards to improve the quality and rigor of adult education.

Objective 4: Provide opportunities and access to postsecondary education by ensuring civil rights for all students.

- Help students, parents, and schools get the information they need to secure equal access to high-quality education.
- Institute a balanced enforcement approach that includes proactive examinations of broad or acute incidences of discrimination and reactive investigations responding to specific complaints.

Performance Indicators for Postsecondary Education and Lifelong Learning

Improved Student Access to and Completion of Postsecondary Education:

- The percentages of students enrolling in a four-year college who graduate within six years and in a two-year college who graduate within two years will increase significantly.
- The gap in college participation between high-performing secondary students with high and low income will decrease significantly.
- The percentage of learners who complete adult secondary education programs or the equivalent and who then enroll in two- or four-year college programs will increase significantly.
- The Department will develop and implement effective systems for informing students about and for handling flexible loan repayment options that result in manageable repayment burdens for all borrowers.
- The Department will disseminate useful information regarding the best practices to improve program quality, encourage broader access to and student success in postsecondary education, and reward successful programs with increased support.
- The Department in partnership with the Department of Labor will prepare a long-term, coherent strategy for lifelong learning that rationalizes the resources and requirements of programs in both agencies to promote broad access to a range of high-quality, non-duplicative education and training programs.
- Respondents to Office for Civil Rights surveys will show greater understanding of their civil rights to education.

Improved Quality:

- The Department will develop and implement an effective method for coordinating efforts of the gatekeeping "triad"—the federal government, states, and accrediting agencies. As a result, the quality of institutions participating in student aid programs will increase and the regulatory burden placed on high-performing institutions will be reduced.
- An institutional data system that will provide information about eligible institutions will be fully operational in 1995.

Improved Management:

- The average error of grant and loan program cost estimates will be no more than 5 percent.
- Data systems to ensure that defaulters are prevented from receiving new loans or grants will be established and used.
- Systems that accurately track program expenditures and result in auditable financial statements will be developed and implemented.

Reduced Costs:

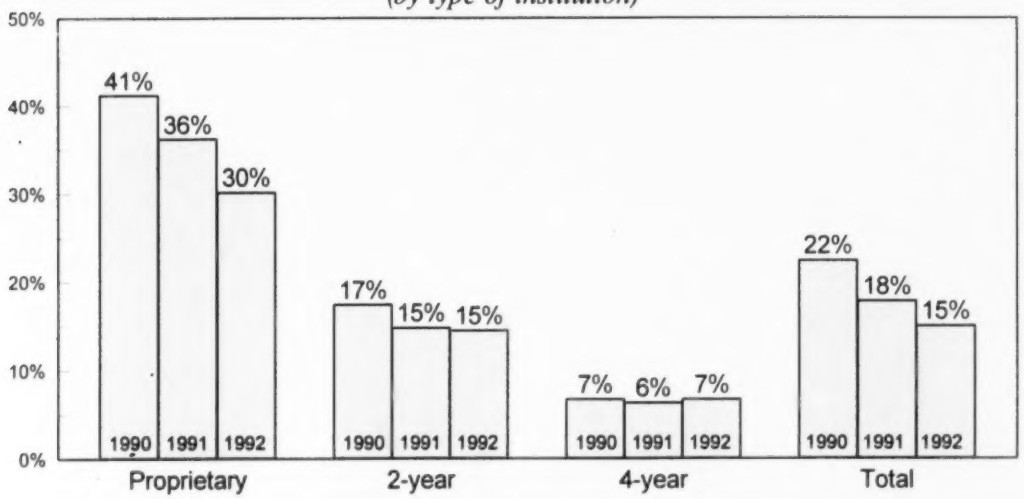
- When fully implemented, the Direct Loan program will save taxpayers more than $1 billion a year.
- The amount of assessed liabilities collected from borrowers will increase by 75 percent.
- Both short-term and long-term measures will be taken to reduce management and paperwork burdens on institutions and students.
- Between 1994 and 1996, collections from recovered defaulted loans will increase by more than $100 million—from $473 million to $587 million.
- Student loan defaults, which decreased by 33 percent from 1990 to 1992, will continue to decline significantly—by at least 5 percent a year.

Examples of Management Reforms for Priority 4

The Department has six objectives for management reform. Two indicators that will show how well we are doing are student loan default rates and improved access to and use of technology.

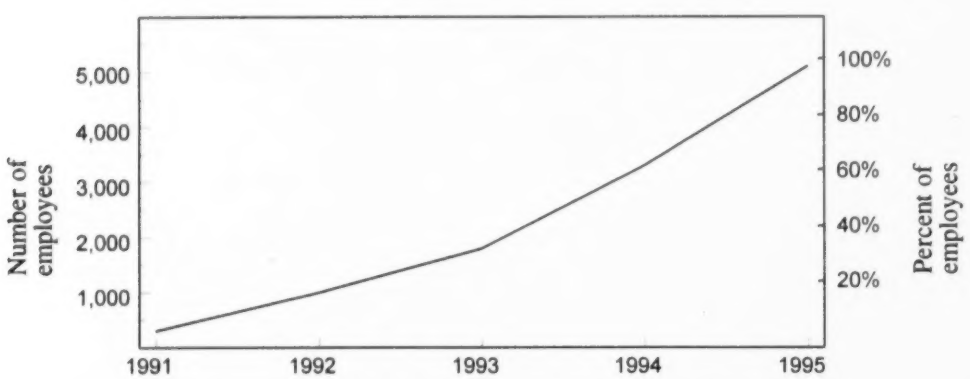
Decrease in Borrower Default Rates for Student Loans

(by type of institution)



Improvements in Department management and program operations have resulted in dramatic changes to the default rate for student loans and large savings to the taxpayer.

Number of Department Employees with Computer Connections



By the end of 1995, all Department employees, including those in our regional offices, will have computers and be connected to the Department's network. Employees on the network can also send e-mail through Internet to customers throughout the nation.

Priority 4

Transform the U.S. Department of Education into a high-performance organization.

In recent years, demands placed on the Department of Education have increased. New resources have become scarcer, confirming the National Performance Review's conclusion in 1993 of the need to "do more with less." In the past, the Department has been criticized for a lack of vision, an absence of leadership, weak management systems, and low morale. The Department is evolving from an agency focused on compliance and auditing to a leader in a national movement to enhance the quality of education in the United States.

To respond to these challenges, the Department must change its management principles and improve its operations. The Department's systems and staff must grow to meet the changing needs for national leadership and efficient, responsive service to the education community, parents, and the public.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Manage the Direct Loan program in an enterprising and efficient way that gets results.

- Provide participating institutions with timely and accurate information and technical assistance to implement direct loans effectively.
- Introduce state-of-the-art information systems with simplified origination and payment transfers.

Objective 2: Build partnerships with our customers and provide maximum flexibility in the administration of federal programs.

- Redirect the Department's regulatory and grants administration practices to reduce unnecessary administrative burden on recipients of federal funds, encouraging them to concentrate resources on improving student achievement and performance.
- Simplify regulations for all of the major federal education programs.
- Provide easy access to information about the Department's programs and about strategies to improve program effectiveness.
- Gather feedback from our customers and use it to improve the quality of our work.

Objective 3: Empower our employees.

- Streamline the Department's personnel process.
- Encourage teamwork.
- Flatten the bureaucracy by reducing organizational hierarchy and increasing supervisors' span of control.
- Make the Department a "learning organization" in which staff at all levels engage in a constant process of self-improvement and cultural change.
- Support diversity by ensuring fairness in employment and by respecting and incorporating human differences.
- Recognize and reward employees for performance.

Objective 4: Develop a world-class information system for the Department and our customers.

- Apply systems design to support the effective integration of technology into office operations.
- Make advanced technology available to employees.
- Use technology to build knowledge and communicate with the public.

Objective 5: Allocate the Department's resources to achieve strategic plan priorities.

- Establish annual budget priorities linked to federal and Department priorities.
- Increase the effectiveness of discretionary grants.
- Align salary and expenses resources to support the key priorities of the Department's leadership.

Objective 6: Increase accountability through performance measures, improved financial management, and evaluation.

- Emphasize improved performance through strategic planning.
- Implement performance agreements for all employees that reflect relevant priorities and objectives in the Department and office strategic plans.
- Implement new strategies for financial management that provide financial, budgetary, and performance data to program managers in a flexible way.

Performance Indicators for Transforming the Department of Education

Excellent Management of the Direct Loan Program:

- Surveys of institutions and borrowers will indicate high degrees of customer satisfaction with all facets of the Direct Loan program.

Improved Customer Service:

- By the end of 1995, customer service standards will be developed for all core services the Department provides.
- A survey of external customers will indicate a high level of satisfaction with the Department's services and administration of programs and with their ease of access to the Department.
- Periodic "test runs" by evaluators will indicate that Department staff provide quick and reliable information.
- By 1998 the standard response time for controlled correspondence will be met in 98 percent of all cases.
- By 1998 our customers' ease of access to the Department through the gateway 1-800-USA-LEARN number will double (as measured by the times in which service is received as the result of one call).

Key Systems Redesigned:

- By 1998 the Department will have implemented a redesigned, integrated financial management system.
- By the beginning of 1995, key components of the personnel system will be in the process of being redesigned to simplify and expedite personnel processes; and four program offices will have been selected for pilots.
- By 1996 the cycle time for the personnel office to fill a position, once posted, will be reduced by 25 percent.
- By 1996 a representative sample of individual performance agreements reviewed by joint management-union teams will show a direct relationship to the Department's strategic plan.
- By 1996 a comprehensive training and employee development strategy will be developed.

Performance Indicators for Transforming the Department of Education (continued)

- The annual employee survey will show increased satisfaction with the Department's commitment to training employees.
- The amounts of training budgets unused at year's end or used for other purposes will decline across the Department by 50 percent yearly through 1998.

Involvement of Employees in Management Reforms:

- An employee survey in 1995 will show that most employees believe that management supports and rewards employees for creativity, initiative, and teamwork.
- The number of teams established to carry out major implementation changes will continue to increase.

Alignment of Resources with Priorities:

- By 1995 significant steps will have been initiated to redeploy personnel to support high-priority new initiatives.
- Each year the annual budget process will continue to link strategic plan priorities to the departmental budget.

Wide Use of Performance Measurement:

- By 1995 performance measures will be used to guide policy and program improvement efforts for the Department's 15 largest programs.

Widely Available and Easily Accessible Information Systems:

- By 1996 the one-stop shopping line for information on Department programs (1-800-USA-LEARN) will be fully operational, covering all programs.
- Monthly town meetings with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary will continue to expand their audience and usage.
- By 1996 public use of the Department's electronic information systems (e.g., computer bulletin boards and Internet nodes) will quadruple.
- By 1995, 10 program offices will have received appropriate hardware and training to store program office records electronically rather than on paper.
- By 1998, 50 percent of new official grants and contracts files will be maintained electronically.

Enhancement of Labor-Management Partnerships:

- By 1996 labor-management partnerships will be implemented and councils and/or agreements will be in place in every bargaining unit of the Department.
- Annual surveys of union leadership and management will indicate that each believes the relationship to be productive and to facilitate employee input.

Streamlined Operations to Complement Reinvention:

- The Department will meet commitments outlined in the 1994 streamlining plan and will continue to improve customer service and integrate functions to achieve efficiency. In particular, head counts in targeted functional areas will be reduced by the following percentages from 1993 to 1999:
  - Personnel specialists down by 24 percent by 1999.
  - Budget specialists down by 25 percent.
  - Acquisition specialists down by 21 percent.
- Organizational layers will be reduced to five layers by 1995 and to three layers by 1997.
- The number of supervisors will decrease from more than 700 to 425 by 1998.
- Span of control will increase steadily from the current 1:6 ratio to a 1:10 ratio by 1997, and a 1:12 ratio in 1999.

The U.S. Department of Education's Organizational Values

1. *We support the Department's mission and the National Education Goals in all of our work.*

2. *Our most important customers are learners of all ages.*

3. *We are committed to providing high-quality service to all our customers.*

4. *We foster learning, innovation, and teamwork throughout the Department.*

5. *Every employee matters—we cooperate and we treat one another with trust and respect.*

For a copy of the Department's strategic plan–

Write to: U.S. Department of Education
Room 2421, FB10B
Washington, D.C. 20202-0498

Telephone: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)

Or, fax your request to: 1-202-401-0689